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ABSTRACT

The focus of this booklet is on the use of simulations in secondary school writing classes. After guiding the teacher through five key questions that need to be addressed in the planning and carrying through of each simulation, the booklet presents four simulations. Varying from simple to complex demands, the booklet's simulations include the following: (1) reporting on college and cafe facilities--a tightly structured simulation, negotiated with the students, in which they can feel secure but can still offer individual responses; (2) working for an agency--a vocational simulation with some loosening of structure and more complex demands; (3) dealing with a social issue, the holocaust--a social simulation with similar loosening of structure and an increase in demands; and (4) establishing priorities--a sophisticated simulation, involving library research, interviews, and challenging role play. (HOD)

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Writing 14 to 18

Discussion Booklet 2

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WRITING WITHIN SIMULATIONS

Related to Social & Work Experiences

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with additional material from
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1984

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Writing with Simulations

The first booklet in this series [1] dealt with writing in the role of a participant observer. Its theme was learning from direct experience. The major alternative - so familiar in school - is learning from books and other second order experience (visuals, diagrams, statistics, documents...). The first problem is: how to bring such material immaginatively to life, especially when it is concerned with social or vocational issues. One answer is to use simulations, the focus for this booklet.

Simulation allows students to act out a situation, to think of it in the role of imaginary participants; in this way second order material like books become less abstract. As we shall see, problems are envisaged much more in the round - students recognise that human beings are involved, rather than questions on a page.

Central questions to consider

In planning and carrying through a simulation a teacher has perhaps five key questions in mind:

1. Is the situation going to involve the students imaginatively? - are they given sufficient opportunity to believe strongly in the events, and to (re-) enact a role?

   Unless it feels 'real' to the students, opportunities for learning will be blocked, and there'll be less motivation.

2. Are the students well enough informed? - are they able to draw on any appropriate experience of their own? - is sufficient information available, and can they internalise it? - are they taking an informed view?

   Knowledge may be more than factual; there may be human feelings, attitudes and beliefs to take into account (and to internalise, so that the student really feels their weight.)

3. What kind of opportunity is there to analyse and weigh up the issues? - what observation of role play and reflective discussion, followed by sifting, categorising and outlining of factors to be considered...? - leading to sensible judgement?

   There will be the need here for notes, diagrams and schema elicited from the class by the teacher, or jointly produced in student groups.

4. Are there appropriate demands for speaking and writing on the issues to further (imaginary) audiences?

   These may take the form of further role play (speaking to an audience) or writing of letters, reports, memos, adverts etc.

5. How much help will the students need through structured materials and activities by the teacher; how far can they themselves suggest and structure the situation and thus their learning?

   We will illustrate in the examples that follow how students themselves can progressively learn to structure, and to take on more complex simulations.

The next step is to test these questions on an example.

Evaluating an elementary simulation

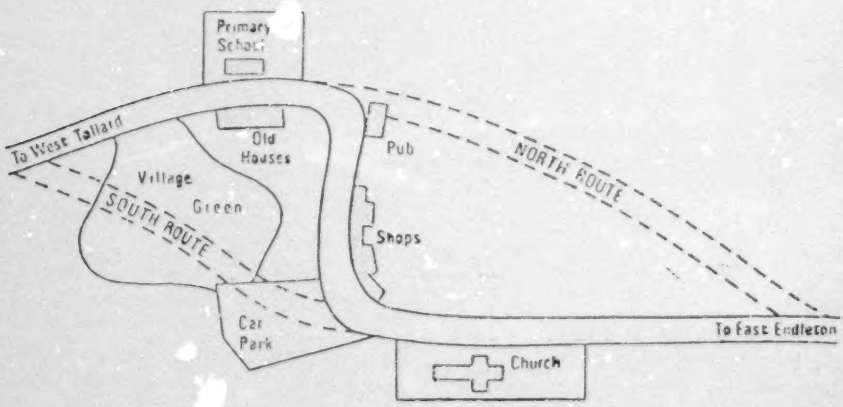
Imagine that the following simulation is a draft prepared by a colleague for discussion and emendation. Read it through and consider how far it meets the five criteria on the opposite page. Think of any changes you would like to propose.

We have made a detailed analysis overleaf.

The village of Tightbend is to have a bypass to avoid a dangerous corner. Two proposals, a North Route and a South Route, have been put forward. You work for a local paper and have gone to the villagers' public meeting. Below are the notes and sketch-map which you made there. Using these notes, and any other information which you may wish to add, write a report for your newspaper about the bypass scheme and the village meeting.

Notes:

Everyone approved of having bypass - opinions divided about which route.
North Route: Still goes by primary school and old houses - runs through village pub (possible to re-locate?) then through open country to join East Endleton road. Objections from brewery and village people: 'pub vital to village life'.
South Route: Shorter and cheaper but would ruin village green, used as a sports ground and children's playground (possible to find another playing area?). Would also do away with car park. Objections from Mothers' Union, Captain of Tightbend Cricket Club, Chairman of Playground Association, and Vicar.
Much strong feeling: no decision taken.



Q.1 How imaginatively involved?

Potential: this is within students' experience, and a typical problem, an important issue to get sensible agreement on, with need for fairness.

a) Can they imagine the village? - a diagram is very abstract (it omits trees, gardens, and the character of the buildings, for instance).

b) We have the cast: how do we make these "divided opinions" and "objections" come to life? - how about the public meeting? Is this real to the students? - can they imagine the passions and personal reactions of individuals actually involved? Probably not.

In this draft, we feel it's going to be difficult for the students to believe in the events.

Q.2 How well informed?

Information in the notes is probably too stripped down. More detailed information would help bring to life how individuals in the cast felt they might suffer, and what reassurances (if any) were offered by the planners. The latter will also have more information to offer on landscaping, traffic flow, pros and cons, etc.

Q.3 What opportunities to analyse?

This use of simulation isn't exploited - in fact the draft prevents students from analysing and weighing up the problem. So room needs to be made for analysis: for instance through a group who observe and report on a simulated "public meeting".

Q.4 How appropriate in demands for speaking & writing?

Potential: this is a situation where interest groups would certainly want to have speakers to put their case effectively and in detail, and a local paper might well want to feature the problem. A newspaper report raises additional problems about the appropriate style and slant to be adopted. Notions such as lead paragraphs, interview clips, headlines and overall tone will need to be explored (possibly with selected examples from actual papers.)

Q.5 What structuring of materials and activities?

The structure is still embryonic; the range of materials and activities will need to be expanded. The model is still too close to a written textbook exercise and the potential for simulation needs more development. (The reader will probably not be surprised to learn that the exercise formed part of an exam.)

TO SUM UP

What have teachers to learn in moving from "text book exercise" to a "simulation" model?

- maps and diagrams need supplementing with drawings & photos
- case histories of people involved create a sense of real characters
- role play helps to bring the cast to life
- documents (such as planners provide) give realistic detail
- richer detail makes analysis more necessary
- prepared speeches can form an important part
- genres like press reports need study in their own right

IN GENERAL

- textbook exercises were meant to fill a 40 minute slot; simulations involve a cumulative chain of activities, need more time, and make more demands for realistic use of language.

* * * * * *

FOUR SIMULATIONS: From simple to complex demands

A. Report on College & Cafe Facilities p.6

A tightly structured simulation, negotiated with the students, in which they can feel secure but still offer individual response. Actual observation and fieldwork involved.

B. Working for an Agency p.11

A vocational simulation with some loosening of structure and more complex demands. Rehearsing for a specific job with general social spin-off.

C. Holocaust p.17

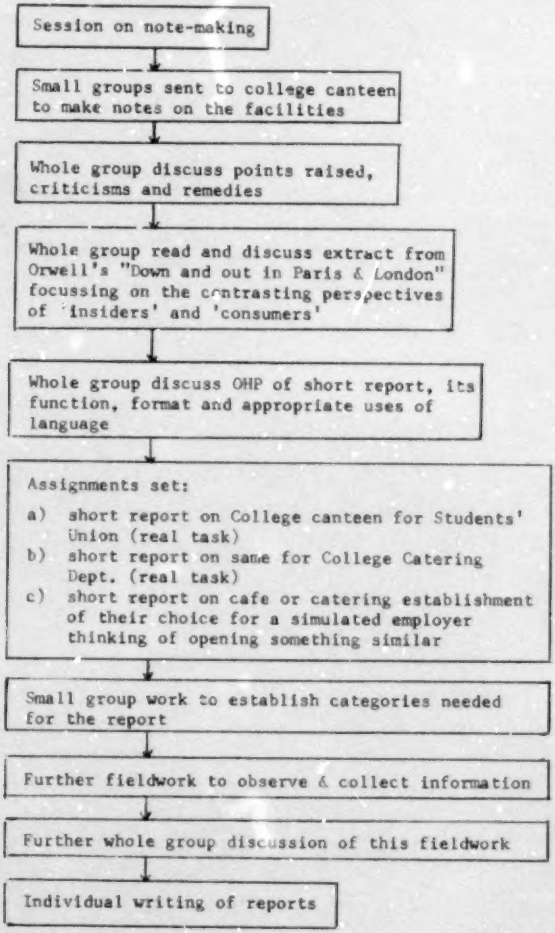
A social simulation with similar loosening of structure and increase in demands. Raises strong moral and political problems for the teacher.

D. Priorities p.24

A sophisticated simulation, involving library research, interviews and challenging role play.

A. REPORT ON CANTEEN FACILITIES

The following simulation was produced by Sandra Boreham (Oxford College of FE) and adapted by her for students aged 16-17+ with a wide range of abilities. Some worked in simulation, others carried through a real joint exercise, reporting to the Deputy Principal. Here is a flow diagram of the activities:


Session on note-making
Small groups sent to college canteen to make notes on the facilities
Whole group discuss points raised, criticisms and remedies
Whole group read and discuss extract from Orwell's "Down and out in Paris & London" focussing on the contrasting perspectives of 'insiders' and 'consumers'
Whole group discuss OHP of short report, its function, format and appropriate uses of language
Assignments set:
a) short report on College canteen for Students' Union (real task)
b) short report on same for College Catering Dept. (real task)
c) short report on cafe or catering establishment of their choice for a simulated employer thinking of opening something similar
Small group work to establish categories needed for the report
Further fieldwork to observe & collect information
Further whole group discussion of this fieldwork
Individual writing of reports

Special features worth comment

* Many activities in this flow diagram were decided on after joint discussion with the students.

* This kind of simulation allows for real observation and genuine interviews.

* Discussion of an example of report format offers a model which the students have to learn to adapt.

* Students' decisions about the categories structure what they look for, and how they report.

* The teacher offers an overall structure but allows for both flexibility and students' taking on responsibility as they learn.

* The combination of simulated and real audiences offers both teacher and students a flexible choice.

Students stand to learn a good deal from the discussion and observation alone. What further learning may go on as they write up their reports? Let us look at two examples, from students at quite different staging points in their development as writers.

1. Report on a Restaurant (extract) for Simulated Employer

Terms of reference ...

Procedure .....

Findings

(i) Hygien

It was very clean inside and the food was hygienicly served. But they didnt clear the tables very quickly. You could see into the kitchin and it was also clean.

(ii) Service

The service was friendly and quick. And very helpfull.

(iii) Staff

The staff were very nice. There was a middle aged women serving the food and a young girl preparing the food.

(iv) Food

The food was very good and reasonably priced. Coffee was 33p a mug and one type of Salad was 60p and for three types it was 90p. But there was a table with alot of cakes on it and they were not covered with anything. And I didnt think that was very good.

conclusion

The restearant is well worth going to. The staff were very nice. The food was good. And it was very clean.

Recomendations

They could lay it out better By having smaller tables And they should clear the tables more often. And cover some of the food more.

What achievements?

The layout is clear and the structure helpful.

Each point observed is useful, relevant and concisely expressed.

Criticisms and suggestions are sensible.

Overall, there is a strong sense that the student is learning to organise her ideas in a systematic way, and to report them to others with a pleasant (and appropriate) tone of confidence.

What further achievements can we see in the following extracts from a writer at a more developed staging point?

2. Report on Student Canteen Facilities (extracts) for Students' Union

2. PROCEDURE

The canteen was visited on three occasions.... Students' views, using the following headings, were canvassed during each of the visits.

a) Aesthetics
b) Service
c) Costs
d) General

3. FINDINGS

a) Aesthetics - The following comments were made by the majority of students included in the survey.

i) The canteen is rather large and "bare" looking.
ii) The colour scheme is bland.
iii) The furniture is basic.
iv) The tables were often dirty.

b) Service

i) At peak times service is slow and long queues develop.
ii) The variety of refreshments were considered adequate.
iii) Many students, although generally satisfied with the choice of snacks, said they would like to see more fruit provided. Usually only apples are available.
iv) The main criticism regarding lunches were that the chips were too greasy and that too much of the food was pre-packed.

c) Costs - A few students considered that the canteen should be subsidised so that charges could be brought down, however the majority of those questioned felt that the prices charged were reasonable.

d) General - Other comments received were:-

i) There should be a non smoking area
ii) The canteen is not large enough. At peak times students cannot always find a seat and have to sit on the floor.
iii) The canteen staff are often in dirty overalls.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

a) Aesthetics - The students comments under this heading were accepted in principle and, subject to the financial resources being available, the following minor changes are recommended:-

i) Provide portable partitions to divide the canteen into two or three smaller areas.

ii) When redecorating use bolder colours. It is suggested that a student competition could be held for a decoration scheme.

iii) Discuss with the canteen management the problem of dirty tables. Hygiene in an eating area is imperative and if necessary additional staff should be employed to carry out the extra cleaning required.

It is not considered feasible or necessary to change the furniture. The high throughput of students and the need to clear tables and clean frequently dictates the use of lightweight easy to clean tables and chairs...

What further achievements?

The layout in sub-sections with listing of points is very helpful.

There is more detail and the comments are more complex.

The results of interviews are summarised effectively.

Because wider language resources are drawn on, the statements are succinct and telling.

The writer (appropriately) adopts a more impersonal style in presenting her findings and reporting what others have said.

There is a comfortable use of the register of committee language.

B. WORKING for an AGENCY

The next simulation was produced by John White (N.Oxfordshire Technical College & School of Art) for his BEC National Diploma/Certificate students. This was their second extended assignment and we can summarise their briefing on the first four tasks as follows:

1. As the senior employee on the full-time permanent staff of 'Super Temp', a secretarial agency in Oxford which supplies temporary staff, you have been asked to prepare the full text of a circular letter designed to recruit housewives with secretarial training and/or experience, who will replace staff in local firms who are absent owing to holidays, illness, overwork or other reasons. You are given the following facts to guide you...

2. Having, as a result of distributing your circular and organising the open evening, prepared a list of housewives interested in "Super-Temp", you decide to compile a questionnaire whose purpose is to provide the factual information you require and to identify applicants who at least merit an interview...

3. You also take in upon yourself to design a leaflet you feel should be sent to local employers of office workers whose aim is to publcise the services of "Super-Temp"...

4. You have also been asked to suggest to your managing director how four secretaries might best be placed in the long-term employment they seek. (Details provided) You have been asked to give your four decisions and full explanations for them in the form of a memorandum...

For each of the four tasks there were detailed notes to guide the students in the course of the activities.

Special features worth comment

* This is a demanding simulation - with room for role play beyond the briefing - but it is related to work that some students will already have had a taste of, and all may want to undertake.

* The group of tasks arise from a responsible role, with varying and complex demands on language and thought.

* A major characteristic is the need to learn to interpret a detailed written brief (including data). There is room for individual interpretation, supported by group discussion.

* With each written product there is obvious scope for feedback from a simulated audience - especially at the drafting stage.

* Indirectly the students are learning to look at themselves as an employer might do. At the same time, they can imaginatively enter the role of the recipient as well as the producer of the circular and questionnaire.

We will now look at the way a pair of students set about tackling two of the tasks. What do they stand to learn in the course of writing, and from discussing each other's products?

1. Circular Letters (extracts)

a) Anne

DEAR HOUSEHOLDERS,

IS YOUR LIFE IN A RUT? HAVE YOR BECOME PART OF THE FURNITURE? THEN SUPER-TEMP HAVE THE ANSWER : BY JOINING OUR AGENCY YOU CAN BEGIN A WHOLE NEW LIFE. WE ARE ONE OF THE LARGEST EMPLOYMENT AGENCYS IN OXFORDSHIRE AND BY JOINING YOU WILL BECOME ONE OF THE HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE WE HAVE ON OUR BOOKS, YOU'RE LIFE MAY HAVE NEW MEANING. YOU WILL BE ABLE TO:

(a) MEET NEW PEOPLE.

(b) HAVE VARIETY IN YOUR WORK.

(c) EARN DECENT MONEY TO PERHAPS HELP PAY FOR THE MORTGAGE.

(d) WORK FLEXIBLE HOURS.

AND (e) GET OUT OF THE HOUSE AND LED A MORE EXCITING LIFE.

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS RING US ON THIS NUMBER: 0865 42833 and FIND OUT WHETHER YOU ARE SUITABLE. WE WILL PROBABLE ARRANGE AN INTERVIEW FOR YOU SO THAT WE CAN GRADE YOU ACCORDING TO YOUR STANDARD AND KIND OF WORK.

b) Jannette

Dear Madam,

Could YOU be the person we are looking for?

If you are a trained and/or experienced secretary and would like a job which can offer the constant variety of temporary work, but with the security of a permanent salary; or if you are thinking of returning to work after bringing up a family and would like a job that fits in with your responsibilities at home, then read on.

We are the top secretarial agency in this area and we specialise in providing temporary staff to local firms who are under-strength due to illness or holidays, or just coping with an increased workload. You may be needed for just half a day or 2/3 weeks, so as mentioned before, there is no lack of variety in this work! You would be employed by us on a permanent basis, either full-time or part-time, so your salary is guaranteed just as with a permanent position. At present rates of pay this means you could earn up to £80 per week (full-time) and in addition to this, we pay all travelling expenses to and from your place or work.

What kind of person have the students got in mind?

What kinds of appeal are they making?

16

Anne's achievements

The address to the reader is punchy and direct.

The language is persuasive.

The layout is uncluttered, catching the eye with bold items in the list.

There is enough information to attract interest.

- Has she in mind a younger woman who wants change and excitement?

Janette's achievements

There is more detail and information for the reader.

There is an emphasis on security, salary and expenses.

The tone is confident but serious.

The reader is still addressed personally.

- Has she in mind an older woman, perhaps with family responsibilities?

With letters of this kind, it is not difficult to try them out on other students or staff, acting as a simulated audience, in order to get feedback and evaluative comment.

2. Staff placement memoranda (extracts)

a) Anne

SUPER-TEMP STAFF EMPLOYEMENT AGENCY, OXFORD

MEMORANDUM

TO: MANAGING DIRECTOR
FROM: Miss Anne ....

DATE: 23/11/81
REF:AG/PM

STAFF PLACEMENTS

Having interviewed four applicants for permanent secretarial positions and also four employers seeking suitable staff, I am now able to make the following suggestions.

My colleagues and feel that Miss Xwould be suitable for placement at Mr A's cosmetics firm; as she is hard-working and responsible, and very good at typing and short-hand. Mr A has stated that he needs someone he can tell his ideas to.

We feel that Miss W would be best suited at Messrs. B as both the proprietors and Miss W are people who want to enjoy their work as much as possible. Messrs. B like to give the impression that they are disorganised and as Miss W's typing and short-hand is a bit shaky she will fit in.

We regard Miss Y as being suitable as a secretary in Mr C's office as she is experianced and knows what she is doing. He needs someone who can deal with some clients herself.

We have reached the conclusion that Miss Z would be the best possible candidate for Mr D's position. He wants someone who is capable and she needs a position where the boss will appreciate her

I trust that these decisions represent the best possible solution and would welcome your comments before any final decision is made.

b) Janette

PLACEMENT OF SECRETARIES

Recently, several local employers seeking secretarial staff and four secretaries anxious to secure permanent employment were interviewed. After subsequent discussion involving many members of the Oxford staff, I feel I can now make the following recommendations for your consideration:-

Miss Y to work with Messrs B: Her experience and maturity make her an ideal choice for this post. Having had a prestigious secretarial post she would be used to planning her work efficiently and would not worry about working on her own, and in fact would probably prefer to do so. Also her experience of life would have taught her not to appear to be over-efficient and she would be able to enjoy the relaxed working atmosphere, and get on well with Messrs.B.

Miss Z to work for Mr D: I feel Miss Z is ideally suited to this particular position. Her quiet personality won't intimidate Mr Z, who naturally will be rather hesitant in his new position. However, despite her retiring nature, she is still efficient enough to run his office and help him make his mark, and her attention to detail will ensure the smooth running of the business and allow him to push ahead with his new project.

What kinds of understanding do the students show?

How effectively do they present their recommendations?

Anne's achievements

The tone is confident and decisive as she presents her recommendations.

The match between employer and applicant is clearly, if briefly, made for all applicants.

The language is terse, pleasantly varied, and under control ("consultative" rather than "formal", as Joos (2) would say).

Janette's achievements

Again, there is more detail and information for the reader.

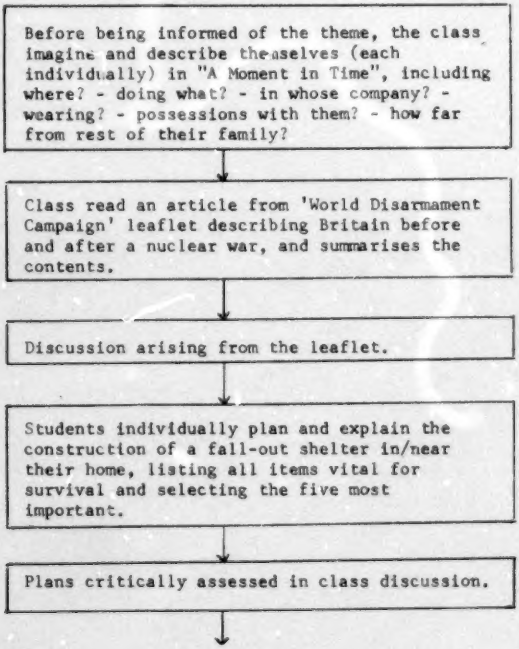
At several points an attempt is made to understand the individual's psychology ("naturally...rather hesitant in his new position").

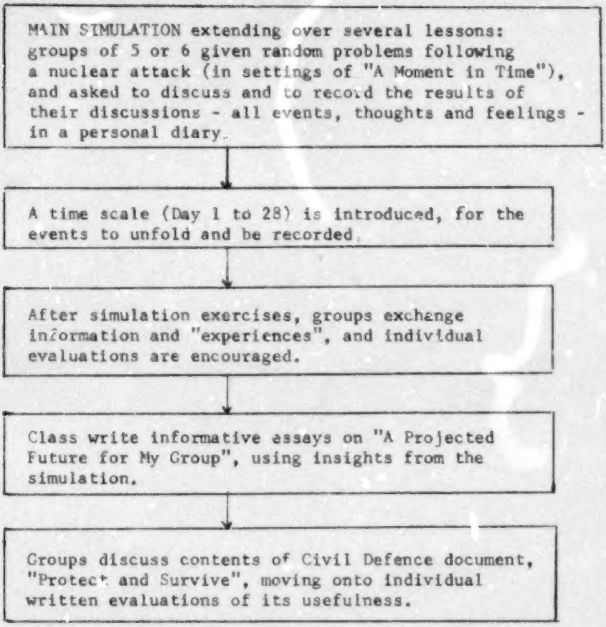
There are more explicit reasons for matching employer and applicant.

The language is more flowing and persuasive in tone, drawing effectively on quite a wide range of structures and vocabulary.

C. HOLOCAUST

Introduction: Simulation of certain social issues is bound to raise strong opinions and feelings, thus the need for the teacher to remain fair, in making available or presenting a range of attitudes and opinions, and not suppressing inconvenient or awkward information. Since we all are biased, teachers need to be explicit about their wish to avoid imposing their bias unconsciously (and remain open to suggestions from students). "Holocaust" is an extreme example of a social issue: most of us are only vaguely aware what happened in 1945, and the vital ethical and political issues raised are naturally argued with passion on all sides. It is frightening to contemplate, but the possibility has already been introduced and discussed in the media. This simulation was produced by Norman Munnery (The Holy Trinity Comprehensive School, Crawley) with his Fourth Year students. Here is a flow diagram of the main activities:


Before being informed of the theme, the class imagine and describe themselves (each individually) in "A Moment in Time", including where? - doing what? - in whose company? - wearing? - possessions with them? - how far from rest of their family?
Class read an article from 'World Disarmament Campaign' leaflet describing Britain before and after a nuclear war, and summarises the contents.
Discussion arising from the leaflet.
Students individually plan and explain the construction of a fall-out shelter in/near their home, listing all items vital for survival and selecting the five most important.
Plans critically assessed in class discussion.


MAIN SIMULATION extending over several lessons: groups of 5 or 6 given random problems following a nuclear attack (in settings of "A Moment in Time"), and asked to discuss and to record the results of their discussions - all events, thoughts and feelings - in a personal diary.
A time scale (Day 1 to 28) is introduced, for the events to unfold and be recorded.
After simulation exercises, groups exchange information and "experiences", and individual evaluations are encouraged.
Class write informative essays on "A Projected Future for My Group", using insights from the simulation.
Groups discuss contents of Civil Defence document, "Protect and Survive", moving onto individual written evaluations of its usefulness.

Special features worth comment

On such a theme, a complex foundation is needed if a simulation is to be of any value. Thus:

Imaginative projection into an every day "moment" forms a vital opening.

Documents have to read, understood, summarised and evaluated.

Planning and explaining a construction makes further demands on practical uses of language.

The class is used to assess individual plans and explanations.

All these activities form the context for the simulated experience. Thus:

Group discussion of how to cope with 'random' events following the attack allows for dramatic involvement and role play.

The personal diary arises from that involvement and allows individuals to carry forward the imaginative work.

Phasing over several 'days' allows the student to enter into the life - and death - of the survivors.

A more reflective phase is allowed for after the simulations, to encourage exchange and further evaluation: these feed into the 'informative' essay.

Further documents can be evaluated to some degree, in the light of what has been learnt through the simulation.

It will not be surprising if the students do not imagine the total destruction likely, nor the possibility of unforeseen consequences, like glacial conditions due to dust clouds.

However, the question we must ask as teachers is what the students seem to be learning, given their current level of understanding of the context. The material is too extensive to be discussed in detail here: instead what we propose to do is to take - rather as we would in class - significant paragraphs from several of the class. These suggest potential achievements of various kinds that could well be discussed in class in order to deepen the imaginative responses of each individual.

1. Extracts from the diaries

"Day One

The land was now black, charred and it was ruined. That day I had come out of my devastated shelter into a new world of death and destruction. My surgery seemed to have imploded on top of me and after that I walked aimlessly for days drinking radio-active water. Later I met a group of ten people, men, women and children. Below is a list of my new group."

This student's achievements include:

- a tense visual impression of the devastation,
- a sense of shock and loss of purpose (the felt side of the experience)

The Group

"after the fear and heat died down I went in search of survivors. I met nine people, these are their names, ages and occupations:

Tasha Anderson	29	Housewife
Danny Anderson	13	Schoolchild
Petra Anderson	8	"
Melissa Anderson	6 months	Infant
Michaela Anderson	6 months	Infant
Juliet Jones	24	Actress
Sharron Chubb	19	Unemployed
Dr Mark Richards	27	Doctor
Michael Turnwell	14	Schoolchild

We have a few belongings, a typewriter, transistor radio, six Mars bars, a rabbit and some clothes. We also have a Doctor's bag and Tasha's handbag and two dogs, and her car.

We have at least one injured person, Juliet Jones, who has a broken foot. The youngest children have a few slight burns.

Tomorrow we plan to build a shelter and get food and water."

This student's achievements include:

- a realistic appreciation of the randomness of such groups and what they have in their possession
- a matter-of-fact tone, without sentimentality, suggesting that practical thinking for survival is beginning.

"Day 2 & 3

Alan and myself have developed symptoms of radiation sickness. That is:-

Dizzyness
Difficulty in breathing
Vomiting
Weakness and a knocked out feeling

Together we decided that our first priority is to look after Alan and myself. We will need more food so the others are going to see if they can find any more food in the cellars or storerooms of any shops. At first we weren't sure whether it was worth looking after us. We argued about it but they decided that they needed Alan and it wouldn't be fair to just leave me. It certainly makes me feel wanted.

We are staying in Alan's shelter as it is the largest. It is in London and we have enough food (hopefully) until we can find some more. We will be going out to look for some more in the rubble. We'll have to be careful because some may have RADIATION inside it which is poisonous. To accomplish our main priority we need more food, pillows, blankets, medical equipment etc.

Alan and I are slowly getting worse. We are soon going to find ourselves without food and water. We are getting desperate.

Moral is getting low. Gemma is the only one with any enthusiasm. Stuart is coping well but he's not on top of the world. Vanessa and Damien are the same. Alan and I are under-standably very depressed. I don't think I can go on for much longer."

This student's achievements include:

- precise and realistic detail about physical effects
- some understanding of moral dilemmas raised
- a growing sense of desperation
- awareness of differences in individual reactions (including his own).

"Day 9 & 10

A week later and have found Andy's shelter. It is occupied by seven other adults. We went in and asked them to get out but they attacked us and as we were out-numbered we just run. Nearby we found a smallish van. Which we used as a base. In the next hour we lost S. Chubb, N.Anderson and her four kids because they had other plans and we really wanted to get rid of them because they are all ill. I was quite sad to see them go but I felt they had to go for our sake. So they disappeared into the distant. The two adults we have got rid off both had bad radiation sickness. Only one person in our new group of four persons has radiation sickness and she has got it very bad.

Our task now is to find food and to find petrol for the van."

This student's achievements include:

- an unblinkered recognition of what the impulse for self-preservation can push people to, in extreme circumstances,
- a hint of the mixed feelings present when the group are released from highly dependent members
- realising how things move for the worse over time

2. An evaluation of 'Protect and Survive' (longer extract)

"My Views on the Usefulness of the Information contained in "Protect and Survive" based on my Experience

Introduction:

The government produced the pamphlet to explain means of survival, before and after, a nuclear attack situation. Most of the information contained in the "Protect and Survive" is not wholly useful. However, the pamphlet does give you some interesting ideas. The following information is explaining the advantages and disadvantages of the pamphlet.

Some advantages of the Information

The pamphlet states simply but efficiently to turn off all power supplies, to shut and barricade all windows and go to the fallout shelter. I found that this information was very useful.

The government have considered - if you were away from home. Normally you would have about 4 minutes to take cover, perhaps, as said, in a ditch with some means of protection. Many people at the nuclear attack warning sound, even if they were more than four minutes away from home would try to reach their families. The pamphlet has explained, quite successly, that it is now every man for himself. Survival would now be extremely important. This is quite interesting as the pamphlet has taken into consideration the normal reaction of a normal person.

They have also explained the different phases of the nuclear blast. These include blast waves (ferocious winds), light, heat and an incredibly destructive vacuum.

Points and Criticisms

Due to high-frequency electro-magnet waves all transistor radios will be totally useless, due to the fact that the transistors would be blown out by the activity.

This will make all radios systems (except piped systems) non-functionable.

This would reduce the possibility of a transmission from the government drastically. At the very end of the pamphlet a sentence reads: ..."and you may resume normal activities". Perhaps an additional number of words at the end of the sentence, such as "under the circumstances", would make it seem a little less unbelievable.

A Conclusive View

Piecing information and useful tips together such as methods of storing water and barricading windows and doors (taken as examples) I come to a final, conclusive fact that the pamphlet was simply printed, not really to inform and advise but to reduce the country's panic.

There is so much useless information, the pamphlet even gives the impression of being in here, this country to soothe people's panic. Maybe we will not find one of these pamphlets in our letterboxes. I hope not."

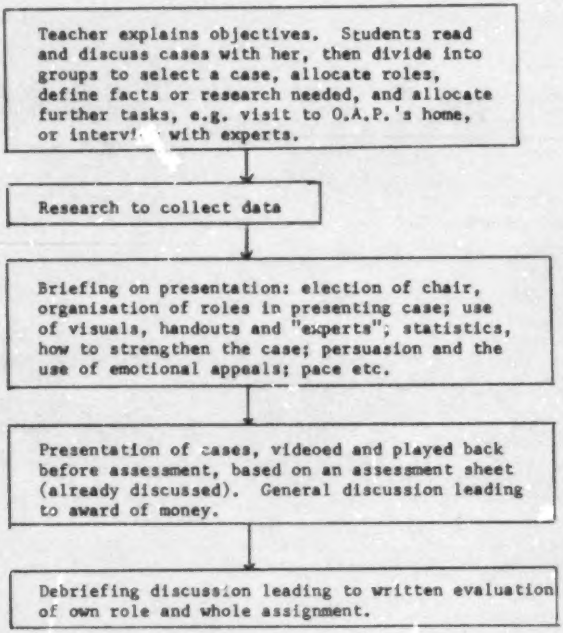
This young writer is attempting a complex task with some confidence. He decided - and this is a personal choice - to weigh up the pros and cons.

The student's achievement include:

- a recognition of realistic parts of the pamphlet and information that could be acted on
- a wider awareness of how people might react
- understanding the sequence of events of a nuclear explosion.
- a realistic awareness of limitations in the pamphlet's assumptions
- and particularly, an ironic view of the key phrase "resume normal activities"
- in conclusion, a realisation of the underlying intentions of the pamphlet's authors.

It is a rather sober document - a shade heavy or awkward in its style at times - but it does indicate how the simulation can open the way to a careful and considered judgment.

In outline the students had to work in groups to prepare a simulated public presentation to the "Allocations Committee", sponsoring one of the five cases. The flow diagram of their activities includes:


Teacher explains objectives. Students read and discuss cases with her, then divide into groups to select a case, allocate roles, define facts or research needed, and allocate further tasks, e.g. visit to O.A.P.'s home, or interv[illegible] with experts.
Research to collect data
Briefing on presentation: election of chair, organisation of roles in presenting case; use of visuals, handouts and "experts"; statistics, how to strengthen the case; persuasion and the use of emotional appeals; pace etc.
Presentation of cases, videoed and played back before assessment, based on an assessment sheet (already discussed). General discussion leading to award of money.
Debriefing discussion leading to written evaluation of own role and whole assignment.

Special features worth comment

This is a realistic situation, with the demand for making an oral case convincingly and sympathetically, knowing it will be judged as in real life.

Students are active as the "audience", the Assessment Committee, which has to choose between the proposals.

Students have to learn to work - and present - as a group.

Students take more responsibility within the structure, (as compared with the Agency), and are aware of their learning objectives from the start.

Language demands are analysed by students more explicitly through the process of briefing and evaluation.

Ideally we should play extracts from the video here! However, failing this, we have drawn on the very full reports prepared by the students, including scripts used as the basis for their talks.

1. Interim report.

We open with a detailed interim report from one group on how they were setting about organising their case in a realistic way.

What kinds of things are they learning in preparation for the simulation?

REPORT ON OAKLEIGH FLATS DAY CENTRE

Having chosen this topic we decided what a basic old peoples flat would consist of; as Joannes grandmother lives in such a flat we have modeled our ideas on this. We then decided to modify the flat to make it into a day centre. I have visited the old peoples flats in Charlbury where they have a lounge, so this gave us a few ideas of what was required.

The first job was to convert the one bedroomed flat into a day centre then equip it with furniture. We drew plans of the exsisting flat and decided which walls it would be best to remove in order to gain the most space. (See drawings on overhead projector paper) We thought the kitchen would be useful for making cups of tea and other refreshments so no alterations are to be made to this area. The bath would not be used, so this is to be replaced by a second toilet and a partition placed between the two toilets, a second wash basin is also required. The bedroom could be an extension of the lounge making one big main room and the area just inside the front door which is a cupboard at present could be used for hanging coats. The main walls could be knocked down to give more space in the main room.

Having established which walls to knock down, the next step was to find furniture to fill the room. Most importantly chairs, some of which will need to be special high-backed ones for those with bad backs, the rest just need to be comfortable chairs and settees. A couple of coffee tables would be very useful. A piano, record player, TV and radio would provide some form of entertainment. We thought it would be nice to have a TV so that people could come down and watch with their friends, rather than sit alone in their flats. The kitchen would also need equipping with cutlery and crockery.

COSTING - The most expensive job would be the actual rebuilding of the flat. The high-backed chairs would also be quite expensive, but the rest of the furniture and fittings we hoped we could get hold of either at second-hand shops or jumble sales or even by kind donations.

Below is a rough idea of cost; it would obviously be cheaper if lots of the goods are donated.

	£	
Piano	10	
Colour TV	70	
Record Player	10	
Radio	5	
Special chairs	100	
Other chairs/settee	50	
2 coffee tables	25	
kitchen ware	-	being donated
Games puzzles etc	-	being donated
	270	

RESEARCH

Joanne got a book from the Library called Working with the Elderly by Enice Mortimer.

The main research is the costing of the building alterations. Joanne has a friend who is a builder so she has asked him for a rough quote.

* * * * *

It becomes obvious from such a report that this "simulation" potentially involves a good deal of "real experience" as well. The linking of the two is important, in our view.

2. Notes for the oral presentation

The group next decided that there would be three main characters in their presentation, the Matron, an Old Person, and a Social Worker. The Matron would act as chair, present the case, and introduce the other two. We first give the notes on which the Old Person was to base her speech:

a) "Old Person

Have lived here a couple of years, having moved here after my husband died. Have only ever got to know people in other flats, no-one from outside. Don't get out much as legs are bad.
Gets very boring sitting in my flat most of the day. If I visit my friend along the corridor her flat is just the same size, shape etc. Don't have alot to occupy my mind. Daughter and Son come every other month or so.
If we had a Day Centre this place would be so much happier, we would have something to look forward to. Even if it were only somewhere else to go - a different room to sit in.
It would be lovely to have a piano and have a sing song. We could even have our own service on a Sunday, the possibilities are endless.

I don't wish to sound too greedy but I really hope we get the money to get a day centre cos I think it would make us all very happy."

To conclude this section: while the focus of this project was on an oral presentation it is already clear that there was ample opportunity for a variety of uses of writing. Having made this point, however, as we must in a booklet that looks specifically at writing within simulations, we certainly ought to add, in conclusion, that role play and simulation characteristically involve many kinds of learning.

Here, for example, are the learning objectives discussed with the students at the beginning of this particular simulation.

Specific objectives include learning to:

"(i) speak in front of an audience

(ii) work in a group - present a team effort

(iii) role play - register -empathy etc...

(iv) Voice - register, projection, intonation

(v) Body language - eye contact etc...

(vii) Audience rapport via (v) and/or power of case - Persuasion - strength of case/use of experts/organization and presentation of material/emotional appeal etc...

(vii) Appreciation of roles and functions e.g. chairperson and linking skills and sequencing

(viii) Research - information retrieval via library, interviews etc...

(ix) Classification and organization of total case + individual's role - use of notes for speech memory wheels etc...

(x) Ability to answer questions put by audience + stay in role

(xi) Assessment of peer's performance via sheet + grid - sharpens appreciation of the skills and re-inforces learning

(xii) self-assessment and critical evaluation of assignment (written)."

* * * *

References

1. Dixon, J. & Stratta, L. Writing as a Participant-Observer: Making the Most of Social & Work Experience. (1984) Copies may be obtained from Southern Regional Examinations Board, 33 Carlton Crescent, Southampton SO9 4YL. Price 35p per copy (post free)

2. Joos, M. The Five Clocks (1961) Harcourt Brace Jovanovich

The Southern Regional Examinations Board Writing Development Group

This group

- meets regularly to discuss social and vocational uses of writing
- are currently working on how to optimise what students can learn from writing in the course of group or individual enterprises
- wants to set up a dialogue with other teachers of English and Communication in schools and FE colleges

Participants:

Mrs S Boreham	Oxford College of F.E., Oxford
H C R Granger	Mandeville County Secondary School, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire
D Kessel	Romsey School, Romsey, Hampshire
E King	Peers School, Oxford
N C Munnery	Holy Trinity School, Crawley, West Sussex
M S Preece	Woolmer Hill School, Haslemere, Surrey
D C Prowles	Queen Mary's College, Basingstoke, Hampshire
M Raleigh	The English Centre, London SW1
G P Stanton	Richmond College, Surrey
J Dixon	Flat 7, 70 Gloucester Avenue, London
L Stratta	Faculty of Education, University of Birmingham
R Osborne	Secretary to the Group: Southern Regional Examinations Board

How to contact:

If you find these ideas useful, we would be very pleased to have feedback from you and your students. We'd be equally glad to hear about problems, additions and modifications you would like to suggest.

Please contact our Secretary: Robert Osborne, Southern Regional Examinations Board, Avondale House, 33 Carlton Crescent, SOUTHAMPTON SO9 4YL.

D. PRIORITIES

The following simulation was produced by Sandra Boreham (Oxford College of FE) working with a group of BEC National students on day release. The students were briefed on the situation as follows:

A local charity, Oxbridge Charities, has £2000 left over from its yearly outlay. It has been decided that the entire sum should be put toward one substantial project rather than scattered over several smaller ones.

The Allocations Committee are holding a meeting to decide how the money should be used. Several sponsors have put forward proposals on behalf of individuals or groups. They are as follows:

1. JIM JONES, SEVERELY DISABLED owing to a road accident several years ago, has made good progress, now holds a responsible job and feels it is time he moved away from the hospital hostel where he has been staying. Jim's only surviving parent, his elderly mother, lives in an old people's home so she would be unable to look after him. The doctor in charge of Jim's case feels moving into his own flat is a very necessary part of Jim's rehabilitation. The Council can offer a ground floor flatlet but it must be equipped with ramps for Jim's wheelchair, doors must be widened, electrical and kitchen equipment adapted for a disabled person and special bathroom fictures installed. The Council is unable to provide this but is happy for Oxbridge Charities to carry out the work.

   Sponsor: D.J.J. Oldfield, Cherwell Health Centre, Cherwell Road, Oxbridge.

2. THE OLD PEOPLE at Oakleigh Flats for the Elderly need a Day Centre. The flats were built some years ago before the Council recognised the old people need not only pleasant, well-equipped flats where they can have privacy, but also a place where they can get together with others for recreation, a cup of tea or just a chat. A fortnight ago Mr. X, a resident in the Flats, was discovered dead from an overdose of sleeping tablets. He had been severely depressed prior to his suicide because of the loneliness and isolation he felt day after day in his flat.

   The Council are willing to allow one of the flats now vacant to be converted into a day centre but have not got the money to pay for the conversion and the provision of the necessary equipment. Social workers concerned with the Flats say the Day Centre would make all the difference to the residents and could even prevent a tragedy such as Mr. X's.

   Sponsor: Mrs. S.B. Wood, Matron, Oakleigh Flats, Boundary Drive, Oxbridge.

Three further proposals followed.

Achievements include:

- the language is suitable for filling out orally, rather than a perfected script
- the ideas fall into four useful sections:
  history and current circumstances of her life, expectations of a Centre, suggestions for specific uses, a personal plea.
- there is tact and direct simplicity throughout (a nice balance of fact and appeal)

b) "Social worker

Have been visiting the old people in Oakleigh flats for sometime now and know these people and their needs. I was very upset by Mr X's death but when you consider his lonliness its not totally surprising. hope this is not going to happen to the others. People living in flats have not necessarily grown up in this area, they moved here after their husband/wife died and because family can't look after them they move away to flats. As they can't get out much they don't get a chance to meet very many people and become very lonely. Rarely visited by family. A day centre would be a life saver for many, they would have somewhere else to go apart from their own flat. They could arrange craft classes etc and would have the chance to meet outsiders. If they wanted someone to talk to or someone else to watch TV with they could go there. It would give them something to look forward to which many of them don't have. It would even mean they would get more exercise walking down the stairs or along corridor to day centre.

It is important to remember the money used for converting this flat will not only provide a centre for the present tenants of Oakleigh flats but all those in years to come. I think £2000 is a small price to pay to make so many peoples lifes more worthwhile and emjoyable."

Achievements include:

- language again suitable for filling out orally
- the ideas fall into three sections, with well-thought out points in each, some reinforcing Old Person, others adding background information or suggestions for the use of the Centre
- a more impersonal tone at times, quite appropriately, but sufficient
- evidence of personal engagement too (again a nice balance)